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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was conducted of a comprehensive plan to restructure a primary school in Candler County, Georgia, into a non-graded, multi-age, continuous progress learning center. The project entailed restructuring the classroom, implementing a shared decision-making structure, developing a learning curriculum, and using portfolio assessment to monitor student progress. The project was evaluated on three objectives: academic success, positive self-esteem and socialization, and the project's shared decision-making structure. These objectives were evaluated according to a case-study design, with the inclusion of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Academic success was examined through the following instruments: the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, portfolio writing, an informal reading inventory, and teacher ranking. Parent questionnaires, teacher questionnaires, and teacher interviews were used to evaluate positive self-esteem and socialization. Teacher interviews, teacher workshops, teacher questionnaires, and parent questionnaires were used to examine the shared decision-making structure. The evaluation found that all three objectives were being met by the project. Caveats included the need for administrative support, teacher understanding and motivation, cooperation from other schools and the central office staff, and community support. (VL)

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Promoting Achievement in Child Centered Education: Evaluation of a Non-Graded, Multi-age, Continuous Progress Primary School (K-3)

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Promoting Achievement in Child Centered Education:
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Continuous Progress Primary School (K-3)

Introduction

Promoting Achievement in Child Centered Education (P.A.C.E.) is a comprehensive plan to restructure Metter Primary School (K-3) (Candler County, Georgia) into a non-graded, multi-age, continuous progress learning center. Metter Primary School has developed a continuous progress curriculum which provides the students the opportunity to proceed from entry at age 5 (K) continuously to age 8 (grade 3). Student progress is assessed through a portfolio which includes teacher observations, samples of student work, and test results where appropriate. The project has been developed in an arrangement of shared decision making between teachers and administrators, which the project participants believe has been critical in the project success.

Supported though the Innovation Program of the State Department of Education of Georgia, the project involves extensive restructuring of the K-3 classrooms, a shared decision making structure, the development of a learning continuum, and the use of portfolio assessment to monitor student progress. This paper will describe the P.A.C.E project and the results of the evaluation required as a part of each innovation program in the state.

The Project

In P.A.C.E., teachers were regrouped into three teaching teams. One of the teams consists of twelve regular classroom teachers (traditional K & 1) and two remedial program teachers. The second

team has the same configuration, except that the traditional teachers are from the second and third grades. The third teams consists of the special education teachers, the physical education teachers, the art teacher, the music teacher, and the media specialist. Team leaders are selected through consensus by the three teams to serve with the principal and the assistant principal as the building leadership team. The leadership team formed teacher committees to plan for curriculum needs, staff development needs, public relations needs, resources and fund raising needs.

The major activity for curriculum and assessment was the development of the learning continuum. The Metter Primary School learning continuum was modeled after the continuum of the British Columbia Ministry of Education with adaptations to include Georgia's Quality Core Curriculum. The continuum is used as a guide for the development and implementation of portfolio assessment and is used in parent conferences. Other major restructuring changes involve the classroom learning environments and the instructional delivery model. Classrooms are organized in learning centers which reflect thematic units which teachers select on a monthly basis. Thematic unit plans and materials are developed by the teachers. Team leaders organize the theme schedules. Teaching strategies used are whole language, cooperative learning, portfolio assessment and math manipulatives.

Evaluation Design

Design Utilized

The evaluation of this project followed a case study design, with the inclusion of quantitative and qualitative techniques for

data collection and analysis purposes. Yin (1989) noted that the case design allows for flexibility and contextual constraints. This design was selected for these reasons, along with the fact that use of a quasi-experimental design was deemed to be inappropriate and essentially unworkable for this project. (Comparisons across age groups and across project years were made whenever the data were available.)

Instrumentation

A variety of data collection instruments and techniques were used for the P.A.C.E. evaluation. While the major consideration in all data collection activities was to minimize disruption and intrusiveness, ample data were obtained to address the project objectives. In the remainder of this section, the project objectives are listed with a description of the data collection instruments for each objective. (See Chart A for a listing of data collection and analysis milestones.)

Objective 1. To create a nurturing environment to ensure maximum opportunities for academic success at the primary level.

The core of the academic record of the P.A.C.E. project consists of the portfolio and the learning continuum. Items from the portfolio, norm-referenced test scores from the student permanent records, and the teacher ranking of student ability were used to address Objective 1.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills has been used on a regular basis as part of the standardized testing program in many of the school

Chart A - Record of Data Collection and Analysis

Objective	Evaluation	Data Collections: On Whom	When	By Whom	Analysis	Results
1. **Academic Success**	ITBS	Students	1989-93	School	ANOVAs, t-tests	
	Informal Reading Inventory (IRI)	Students	1992-93	Teachers	Correlation with ITBS & student ranking	
	Teacher ranking of student ability	Students	1993	Teachers	Correlation with ITBS & IRI	
	Portfolio writing	Students	1991-93	Ed. Res. Lab, UGA	Process Writing Scale	
	Parent Questionnaire	Parents	1992	School Adm.	Descr. Stats., Content Analysis	
2. **Positive Self-esteem & Socialization**	Parent Questionnaire	Parents	1992	School Adm.	Content Analysis	
	Teacher Questionnaire	Teachers	Spring 1992 Spring 1993	School Adm.	Content Analysis	
	Teacher Interviews	Teachers	1992	Evaluator	Content Analysis	
	Teacher Workshop	Teachers	1993	Consultant	Content Analysis	
3. **Shared Decision-making Structure**	Teacher Questionnaire	Teachers	Spring 1992 Spring 1993	School Adm.	Content Analysis	
	Teacher Interviews	Teachers	1992	Evaluator	Content Analysis	
	Organizational Health Instrument	Teachers (Systemwide)	1991-92	School Adm.	Descriptive Statistics, t-tests	

systems in Georgia. The validity and reliability of the ITBS is well-documented and generally accepted. Because new norms were developed for the 1993 ITBS, extreme caution should be taken in any analysis using these scores, especially in comparison with scores based upon the previous norms. Conversion factors for comparing the 1993 ITBS scores with previous scores were not available when this evaluation was completed. (The ITBS scores used for the P.A.C.E. project are listed on Chart B and Chart C.)

Third grade ITBS scores were collected for Metter Primary School students since the 1991-1992 school year. Prior to this time, the ITBS was administered only to the third graders in the Chapter I program. Thus, comparisons could be made for third graders who were in the program for one year and third graders who were in for two years. (ITBS scores are discussed in terms of grades because of how they are reported.)

Chapter I students are given the ITBS each year they receive service, so ITBS scores could be available for some students for first through fifth grades. The progress of Chapter I students in terms of ITBS scores is examined (Charts B and C) for Chapter I first, second, third and fourth grade students generally from 1989-90 to 1992-93.

Portfolio Writing

Writing samples from randomly selected student portfolios were analyzed using the Developmental Stage Scoring Guidelines of the Georgia Writing Assessment for Grade 3-5 (Georgia Department of Education, 1993). A writing sample from the fall of a student's

Chart B - ITBS Data Collection Schedule for Same Grade Comparisons

1989-1990	1990-1991 (Project Planning)	1991-1992 (Project Year)	1992-1993 (Project Year)

All Students

Third Grade ITBS - All (N = 131) → Third Grade ITBS - All (N = 102)

Chapter I Students

Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I → First Grade ITBS - Chapter I

First Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I

Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Third Grade ITBS - Chapter I

Third Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Fourth Grade ITBS - Chapter I

First Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I

Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Third Grade ITBS - Chapter I

Third Grade ITBS - Chapter I → Fourth Grade ITBS - Chapter I

Chart C - ITBS Data Collection Schedule for Class Histories
Chapter I Students

1989-1990	1990-1991 (Project Planning)	1991-1992 (Project Year)	1992-1993 (Project Year)
	{Kindergarten}	First Grade → ITBS - Chapter I (N = 26)	Second Grade ITBS - Chapter I *(2 yrs. in PACE)*
{Kindergarten}	First Grade → ITBS - Chapter I (N = 18)	Second Grade → ITBS - Chapter I	Third Grade ITBS - Chapter I *(2 yrs. in PACE)*
(First Grade)	Second Grade → ITBS - Chapter I (N = 44)	Third Grade → ITBS - Chapter I	Fourth Grade ITBS - Chapter I *(1 yr. in PACE)*
Second Grade → ITBS - Chapter I (N = 22)	Third Grade → ITBS - Chapter I	Fourth Grade → ITBS - Chapter I	Fifth Grade ITBS - Chapter I *(0 yrs. in PACE)*

first year in the project and the spring of the student's second year in the project (or first year, depending on how long in the project) were analyzed. Alphabetical lists of students were used by the teachers to select every third student whose writing would be analyzed.

According to Dr. David Payne, Director of the Writing Assessment Project, and Dr. Belita Gordon, Associate Director of the Project (personal communication, 1993), any paper which is scorable is considered to be at least at the third grade level. The inter-rater reliability coefficient for the analytic scoring system is .82, and it is better for the developmental stages used for the P.A.C.E. project. The P.A.C.E. papers were scored by two raters trained by the Writing Assessment Project; agreement was obtained on over 98% of the ratings.

Informal Reading Inventory

An informal reading inventory (IRI) was completed by every fourth year student who would be moving to Metter Middle School for the 1993-1994 academic year. The Silvaroli IRI was used to determine individual student word recognition, comprehension skills, spelling ability, and listening capacity (contact the authors for a copy of the IRI). The inventory used at Metter Primary included forms A and B, which are designed for grades 1-6. Teacher time spent varied from 12-20 minutes per child. The IRI gives individual independent and instructional reading levels. Since it is contextually based, is done individually, and allows for prompts to students, it is different from the ITBS. Teachers at Metter Primary School contend

that it is a much better indicator of a student's reading ability, not test-taking ability.

Teacher Ranking

Teachers were asked to rank their current fourth year students in terms of academic ability in relation to the other fourth year students in the class. Rankings were lowest third of the class, middle third of the class, and highest third of the class.

Objective 2. To create a nurturing learning environment to ensure maximum opportunities for developing positive self-esteem and socialization.

Formal instrumentation for measuring self-esteem and socialization were not used, primarily due to the request of the teachers that data collection be as unobtrusive as possible. Data used to address this objective are from parent and teacher interviews and questionnaires.

Parent Questionnaire

A survey of parents was conducted in May 1992 and August 1993, utilizing a questionnaire developed by the project staff and the evaluator. Questions elicited parent perceptions about student academic progress, multi-age and heterogeneous grouping, parent conferences, and student portfolios.

Teacher Questionnaires

In the spring of 1992 and the spring of 1993, project teachers completed a teacher questionnaire designed by the project coordinator and the evaluator. Questions elicited teacher perceptions of student academic and social progress, self-esteem,

heterogeneous and multi-age grouping, parent conferences, and portfolio assessment.

Teacher Interviews

Teachers interviews were conducted during the first year of the project (1991-1992). Emphasis was on teacher perception of multi-age and heterogeneous grouping, portfolio assessment, parent conferences, the pod structure, and curriculum changes. The questions were developed by the project coordinator, the project evaluator, and the principal. Interviews were conducted by the evaluator.

Objective 3. To create a shared decision making structure for faculty, staff, administrator and students to ensure a cohesive, uniformed approach to the development of a nurturing learning environment.

Data collected from the following instruments and described under Objective 2 were also used to address Objective 3: Teacher Interviews, Teacher Workshop, Teacher Questionnaires, and Parent Questionnaire.

Results

A variety of quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to collect data for the P.A.C.E. project evaluation. Results of the analyses for both quantitative and qualitative data are presented with each objective which they address.

Objective 1. Academic Success

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) - ITBS scores were analyzed for all students and for Chapter I students. Same grade comparisons for

all third grade students, first through fourth grade Chapter I students (Chart B), and the class histories for Chapter I students (Chart C) are presented below. (Because of the lack of covariates for determining at what point any of these groups were upon entering Metter Primary School, caution should exercised in interpreting the results of the data analysis. ITBS scores are presented for those adopting sites that are interested in standardized test score performance. Additional caution should be noted because of the apparent context-bound nature of the P.A.C.E. Project for which standardized tests--especially norm-referenced--tests may be inappropriate.)

Third grade ITBS: Third grade ITBS scores in reading and math were compared for all students in the program for two years in 1992-1993 and one year in 1991-1992.

As can be seen in Table 1, there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups of students. The academic achievement of the P.A.C.E. third grades as measured by the ITBS remained stable over the two years of the project. (This is counter to some teacher and parent perceptions that the project would cause a drop in scores over time.)

Chapter I Students - Same grade comparisons for ITBS. The results of same grade comparisons for Chapter I students are presented in Tables 2 - 5, with summaries on Tables 6-7. Students included in all Chapter I score sets meet state and federal guidelines for Chapter I eligibility.

Table 1: THIRD GRADE SCORES
ALL STUDENTS INCLUDED

A COMPARISON OF FOURTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 3RD GRADERS), FIFTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 4TH GRADERS) AND SIXTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 5TH GRADERS) STUDENTS.

READING (NCE) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	102	38.40	-
FIFTH YEAR	131	38.37	-
SIXTH YEAR	46	36.30	-

READING (NPR) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	102	34.54	-
FIFTH YEAR	131	34.14	-
SIXTH YEAR	46	28.63	-

MATH (NCE) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	102	42.40	-
FIFTH YEAR	131	41.33	-
SIXTH YEAR	46	37.54	-

MATH (NPR) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	102	39.15	-
FIFTH YEAR	131	37.96	-
SIXTH YEAR	46	32.85	-

Key differences are listed below:

First grade (Table 2). Current first graders who had been in the program for two years preformed statistically significantly better in reading than the first graders in P.A.C.E. for only one year, but not significantly better than first graders who were never in the project. There were no differences among the three groups in terms of math ITBS scores.

Second grade (Table 3). Second graders in 1990 and 1991 had not been in the project at the time that they took the ITBS, but they statistically significantly out-performed in reading those second graders who had been in the program one year (1992) or two years (1993). In mathematics, the same results were generally found, except that the 1991 second graders' scores were statistically significantly better than the 1993 second graders' scores.

Third grade (Table 4). Similar to the second graders who had not participated in P.A.C.E., third grade students who had not been in this program statistically significantly out-performed in reading those third grade students who had been in the program one or two years.

Fourth grade (Table 5). The fourth grade Chapter 1 comparisons are similar to those for the first grade. Reading scores for 1993 fourth graders who had been in the program one year were slightly better than the reading scores for the 1992 fourth graders who had not been in the program at all. The 1993 fourth graders did statistically significantly better than the 1992 fourth graders who had not been in P.A.C.E.

Table 2: 1ST GRADE SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

A COMPARISON OF SECOND YEAR (CURRENTLY 1ST GRADERS), THIRD YEAR (CURRENTLY 2ND GRADERS), AND FOURTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 3RD GRADERS) STUDENTS USING A ONEWAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND A MODLSD RANGE TEST.

READING (NCE) P≤ .04

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
SECOND YEAR	1993	48	33.56	2>3
THIRD YEAR	1992	46	28.04	-
FOURTH YEAR	1991	65	31.94	-

READING (NPR) P≤ .04

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
SECOND YEAR	1993	48	25.17	2>3
THIRD YEAR	1992	46	18.87	-
FOURTH YEAR	1991	65	21.40	-

MATH (NCE) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
SECOND YEAR	1993	48	28.77	-
THIRD YEAR	1992	46	26.41	-
FOURTH YEAR	1991	63	26.40	-

MATH (NPR) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
SECOND YEAR	1993	48	20.98	-
THIRD YEAR	1992	46	21.13	-
FOURTH YEAR	1991	64	17.84	-

Table 3: 2ND GRADE SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

A COMPARISON OF THIRD YEAR (CURRENTLY 2ND GRADERS), FOURTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 3RD GRADERS), FIFTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 4TH GRADERS), AND SIX YEAR (CURRENTLY 5TH GRADERS) STUDENTS USING A ONEWAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND A MODLSD RANGE TEST.

READING (NCE) P≤ .001

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
THIRD YEAR	1993	59	22.68	-
FOURTH YEAR	1992	68	20.96	-
FIFTH YEAR	1991	44	33.41	5>4,3
SIXTH YEAR	1990	32	35.16	6>4,3

READING (NPR) P≤ .001

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
THIRD YEAR	1993	59	14.63	-
FOURTH YEAR	1992	68	12.09	-
FIFTH YEAR	1991	44	23.98	5>4,3
SIXTH YEAR	1990	32	27.25	6>4,3

MATH (NCE) P≤ .01

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
THIRD YEAR	1993	58	35.48	-
FOURTH YEAR	1992	68	37.54	-
FIFTH YEAR	1991	45	45.67	5>3
SIXTH YEAR	1990	32	45	-

MATH (NPR) P≤ .02 (NO TWO GROUPS ARE SIGN. DIFFERENT AT THE .05 LEVEL)

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
THIRD YEAR	1993	58	30.91	-
FOURTH YEAR	1992	68	33.13	-
FIFTH YEAR	1991	45	44.24	-
SIXTH YEAR	1990	32	43.66	-

Table 4: THIRD GRADE SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

A COMPARISON OF FOURTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 3RD GRADERS), FIFTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 4TH GRADERS) AND SIXTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 5TH GRADERS) STUDENTS USING A ONEWAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND A MODLSD RANGE TEST.

READING (NCE) P≤ .005

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	1993	27	22.81	-
FIFTH YEAR	1992	47	26.12	-
SIXTH YEAR	1991	30	33.57	6>4,5

READING (NPR) P≤ .01

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	1993	27	12.67	-
FIFTH YEAR	1992	47	17.77	-
SIXTH YEAR	1991	30	24.60	6>4

MATH (NCE) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	1993	27	27.19	-
FIFTH YEAR	1992	46	31.37	-
SIXTH YEAR	1991	31	36.19	-

MATH (NPR) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FOURTH YEAR	1993	27	18.22	-
FIFTH YEAR	1992	46	25.26	-
SIXTH YEAR	1991	31	30.03	-

Table 5: FOURTH GRADE SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

A COMPARISON OF FIFTH (CURRENTLY 4TH GRADERS) AND SIXTH YEAR (CURRENTLY 5TH GRADERS) STUDENTS USING A ONEWAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AND A MODLSD RANGE TEST.

READING (NCE) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FIFTH YEAR	1993	61	32.93	-
SIXTH YEAR	1992	46	31.74	-

READING (NPR) NO SIGNIFICANCE

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FIFTH YEAR	1993	61	24.44	-
SIXTH YEAR	1992	46	23.26	-

MATH (NCE) $P \leq .05$

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FIFTH YEAR	1993	63	33.82	5>6
SIXTH YEAR	1992	46	28.20	-

MATH (NPR) $P \leq .03$

GROUP	YEAR	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
FIFTH YEAR	1993	63	26.97	5>6
SIXTH YEAR	1992	46	18.93	-

Table 6: FIRST THROUGH FOURTH GRADE READING SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

GROUP		1ST GRADE READING (NCE)	1ST GRADE READING (NPR)	2ND GRADE READING (NCE)	2ND GRADE READING (NPR)	3RD GRADE READING (NCE)	3RD GRADE READING (NPR)	4TH GRADE READING (NCE)	4TH GRADE READING (NPR)
SECOND YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	33.56	25.17	-	-	-	-	-	-
	n	(48)	(48)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1993	1993	-	-	-	-	-	-
THIRD YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	28.04	18.87	22.68	14.63	-	-	-	-
	n	(46)	(46)	(59)	(59)	-	-	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1992	1992	1993	1993	-	-	-	-
FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	31.94	21.40	20.96	12.09	22.81	12.67	-	-
	n	(65)	(65)	(68)	(68)	(27)	(27)	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1991	1991	1992	1992	1993	1993	-	-
FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	-	-	33.41	23.98	26.12	17.77	32.93	24.44
	n	-	-	(44)	(44)	(47)	(47)	(61)	(61)
	YEAR TAKEN	-	-	1991	1991	1992	1992	1993	1993
SIXTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	-	-	35.16	27.25	33.57	24.60	31.74	23.26
	n	-	-	(32)	(32)	(30)	(30)	(46)	(46)
	YEAR TAKEN	-	-	1990	1990	1991	1991	1992	1992

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Table 7: FIRST THROUGH FOURTH GRADE MATH SCORES
CHAPTER SCORES ONLY

GROUP		1ST GRADE MATH (NCE)	1ST GRADE MATH (NPR)	2ND GRADE MATH (NCE)	2ND GRADE MATH (NPR)	3RD GRADE MATH (NCE)	3RD GRADE MATH (NPR)	4TH GRADE MATH (NCE)	4TH GRADE MATH (NPR)
SECOND YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	28.77	20.98	-	-	-	-	-	-
	n	(48)	(48)	-	-	-	-	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1993	1993	-	-	-	-	-	-
THIRD YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	26.41	21.13	35.48	30.91	-	-	-	-
	n	(46)	(46)	(58)	(58)	-	-	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1992	1992	1993	1993	-	-	-	-
FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	26.40	17.84	37.54	33.13	27.19	18.22	-	-
	n	(63)	(64)	(68)	(68)	(27)	(27)	-	-
	YEAR TAKEN	1991	1991	1992	1992	1993	1993	-	-
FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	-	-	45.67	44.24	31.37	25.26	33.82	26.97
	n	-	-	(45)	(45)	(46)	(46)	(63)	(63)
	YEAR TAKEN	-	-	1991	1991	1992	1992	1993	1993
SIXTH YEAR STUDENTS	MEAN	-	-	45.00	43.66	36.19	30.03	28.20	18.93
	n	-	-	(32)	(32)	(31)	(31)	(46)	(46)
	YEAR TAKEN	-	-	1990	1990	1991	1991	1992	1992

Chapter I student - Class histories (Tables 8-11). Students included in a class history data set must have a score (i.e., must have been in Chapter I) each year in order to remain in the class (i.e., the data set), thus accounting for the small number of subjects for each class history as compared to the same grade Chapter I comparisons above.

The only longitudinal view of progress of a class was obtained for the Chapter I students (Chart C). Similar to the results for the Chapter I same grade comparisons, the results do not fit a clear pattern. Interpretations of these data are extremely difficult, especially because of the small number of cases for some classes and the change in norms for the 1992-1993 test year. What is interesting to note with this set of data is that statistically significantly lower scores in reading were obtained for those years that the students had been in the program when compared to previous years when they had not. For example, first year students' second grade ITBS reading scores (one year in P.A.C.E.) were statistically significantly lower than their first grade scores (non-project year). (This could be interpreted as an invalid application of the ITBS because of the context-based curriculum and the academic deficiencies of the students.)

ITBS summary. ITBS scores should be interpreted with extreme caution for a wide variety of reasons, as mentioned above. The ITBS results for third graders who leave Metter Primary after one or two years in the program are compelling evidence that student progress has not been negatively affected by the changes at the school.

Table 8: THIRD YEAR STUDENTS
CHAPTER ONLY

PAIRED T-TEST (1ST AND 2ND GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
1ST	READING (NCE)	26	33.43	P≤ .006
2ND	READING (NCE)	26	26.95	
1ST	READING (NPR)	26	17.69	P≤ .002
2ND	READING (NPR)	26	7.71	

PAIRED T-TEST (1ST AND 2ND GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN	SIGNIFICANCE
1ST	MATH (NCE)	26	26.81	NONE
2ND	MATH (NCE)	26	29.04	
1ST	MATH (NPR)	26	22.54	NONE
2ND	MATH (NPR)	26	23.12	

Table 9: FOURTH YEAR STUDENTS
CHAPTER ONLY

PAIRED T-TEST (1ST, 2ND, 3RD GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
1ST	READING (NCE)	18	33.67
2ND	READING (NCE)	18	17.16
3RD	READING (NCE)	18	23.67
1ST	READING (NPR)	18	23.44
2ND	READING (NPR)	18	7.33
3RD	READING (NPR)	18	13.06

SIGNIFICANCE OF (NCE) = $P \leq .001$ 1>2, $P \leq .003$ 1>3, NONE = 2,3
SIGNIFICANCE OF (NPR) = $P \leq .001$ 1>2, $P \leq .004$ 1>3, $P \leq .04$ 3>2,

PAIRED T-TEST (1ST, 2ND, 3RD GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
1ST	MATH (NCE)	18	25.89
2ND	MATH (NCE)	18	33.17
3RD	MATH (NCE)	18	25.00
1ST	MATH (NPR)	18	15.56
2ND	MATH (NPR)	18	27.83
3RD	MATH (NPR)	18	16.33

NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE FOR (NCE)
SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE FOR (NPR) $P \leq .025$ 2>1

Table 10: FIFTH YEAR STUDENTS CHAPTER ONLY

PAIRED T-TEST (2ND, 3RD, 4TH GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
2ND	READING (NCE)	43	33.79
3RD	READING (NCE)	43	26.84
4TH	READING (NCE)	43	33.74
2ND	READING (NPR)	43	24.39
3RD	READING (NPR)	43	18.40
4TH	READING (NPR)	43	25.49

SIGNIFICANCE OF (NCE) = P≤ .003 2>3, NONE = 2,4, P≤ .003 4>3
SIGNIFICANCE OF (NPR) = P≤ .029 2>3, NONE = 2,4, P≤ .004 4>3

PAIRED T-TEST (2ND, 3RD, 4TH GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
2ND	MATH (NCE)	44	44.98
3RD	MATH (NCE)	44	33.45
4TH	MATH (NCE)	44	33.55
2ND	MATH (NPR)	44	43.23
3RD	MATH (NPR)	44	26.30
4TH	MATH (NPR)	44	26.91

SIGNIFICANCE OF (NCE) = P≤ .001 2>3, P≤ .001 2>4, NONE = 3,4
SIGNIFICANCE OF (NPR) = P≤ .001 2>3, P≤ .002 2>4, NONE= 3,4

Table 11: SIXTH YEAR STUDENTS CHAPTER ONLY

PAIRED T-TEST (2ND, 3RD, 4TH, 5TH GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
2ND	READING (NCE)	22	32.86
3RD	READING (NCE)	22	32.55
4TH	READING (NCE)	22	31.50
5TH	READING (NCE)	22	32.95
2ND	READING (NPR)	22	23.27
3RD	READING (NPR)	22	22.31
4TH	READING (NPR)	22	22.41
5TH	READING (NPR)	22	24.23

SIGNIFICANCE OF (NCE) = NO GROUPS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT
SIGNIFICANCE OF (NPR) = NO GROUPS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT

PAIRED T-TEST (2ND, 3RD, 4TH, 5TH GRADE SCORES)

GRADE	SUBJECT	n	MEAN
2ND	MATH (NCE)	24	46.58
3RD	MATH (NCE)	24	37.96
4TH	MATH (NCE)	24	30.29
5TH	MATH (NCE)	24	29.71
2ND	MATH (NPR)	24	45.79
3RD	MATH (NPR)	24	32.38
4TH	MATH (NPR)	24	21.71
5TH	MATH (NPR)	24	19.71

SIGNIFICANCE OF (NCE) = $P \leq .021$ 2>3, $P \leq .001$ 2>4, $P \leq .001$ 2>5, $P \leq .014$ 3>4, $P \leq .007$ 3>5
SIGNIFICANCE OF (NPR) = $P \leq .019$ 2>3, $P \leq .001$ 2>4, $P \leq .001$ 2>5, $P \leq .003$ 3>4, $P \leq .007$ 3>5

Informal Reading Inventory and Teaching Ranking

During the 1992-1993 project year, P.A.C.E. teachers had their students complete an informal reading inventory. The teachers also estimated academic ranking of their students in relation to the other members of their class. The reading inventory (IRI) scores, teacher rankings, ITBS scores for all fourth year (third grade) students were correlated to determine the strength of the relationships between these standardized and nonstandardized indicators of student performance.

The IRI was statistically significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with the ITBS reading and math scores; the correlations ranged from .22 - .33. Teacher rankings were also statistically significantly correlated ($p < .05$) with these scores, with correlations ranging from .43 - .50. Finally, the teacher ranking and the IRI were statistically significantly correlated ($r = .25$; $p < .05$).

These results reflect a congruence among teacher assessment of student ability, informal reading assessment, and standardized test scores. While these correlations are not particularly strong, they do support the argument that the P.A.C.E. teachers have a clear assessment of their students' academic abilities. The phrase "kid watcher," which the teachers are quite found of using to describe themselves, appears to be accurate.

Portfolio Writing Assessment

Randomly selected writing samples from student portfolios were analyzed using the Developmental Stage Scoring Guidelines of the Georgia Writing Assessment for Grades 3-5. Scores for readable

samples range from 1 to 6 (see Appendix A). Although the scale is intended for grades 3-5 and is currently in the pilot phase, it was used to provide another indication of the academic progress of the P.A.C.E. students. There were 65 pairs of samples (pre/post) taken for students over a two year period of the project and 35 pairs of writing samples taken for students over a one year of the project. As shown in Table 12, 83% of students with samples over a two year period gained at least one developmental stage on the Writing Assessment Scale. Almost 70% of the students with samples over a one year period gained at least one developmental stage. What is important to note is that no student in this sample had an unscorable paper for the second writing sample.

In addition to these paired samples, 305 writing samples (from all ages of students) from the Spring of 1993 were scored. Of these 305 samples, over 55% of the K-1 samples and over 90% of the 2-3 samples were scored as a level 2 (focused writer) or above for the third grade scoring guide. (Although there is no clear comparative base for these scores, and even though there are no grade level conversions for each scale indicator, the fact that almost all 305 papers were scored in terms of a grades 3-5 scale should be viewed positively.)

Parent Questionnaire

Because student progress was monitored and reported in a format that was new to the parents of Metter Primary School students, it was important to determine parent reaction to this portfolio assessment and parent conferences. In 1992, 215 out of 474 (45.4%) of the

Table 12: Portfolio Writing Assessment

Pre/Post Assessments:

Number of Paired Samples	Time	Points Gained	N
N = 65	2 Years	-1	1
		0	10
		1	31
		2	19
		3	4
N = 35	1 Year	0	11
		1	18
		2	1
		3	5

1993 Writing Assessments (n=305)

Category	Score	Frequency	
Cannot Be Scored	8		
Copied/Not Original	9	State:	Unreported
		K-1	6 (13%)
		2-3:	1 (0.4%)
Emerging	1	State:	3.0%
		K-1	13 (28.2%)
		2-3:	24 (9.3%)
Developing	2	State:	30.8
		K-1	24 (52.2%)
		2-3:	157 (60.6%)
Focusing	3	State:	41.8%
		K-1	3 (4.3%)
		2-3:	69 (26.6%)
Experimenting	4	State:	17%
		K-1	0
		2-3:	7 (2.7%)
Engaging	5	State:	5.8%
		K-1	0
		2-3:	1 (0.4%)
Extending	6	State:	1.5%
		K-1	0
		2-3:	0

questionnaires were returned. In 1993, 310 out of 483 (64.2%) of the questionnaires were returned.

As can be seen in Table 13, over 99% of the parents in 1992 and 96% in 1993 stated that the conferences were set up at a time best suited to their needs and that they were well informed by the teachers. Of the 230 comments written in 1992 about the parent conferences and the 186 comments written about the portfolios, 88.7% of the comments on parent conferences and 94.6% of the comments about the portfolios were related to what parents liked best about these two items. For both years, parents liked the individual contact and extra time with teachers, the teacher's attitude and professionalism, and the opportunity to discuss their child's strengths and weaknesses. The parents liked the fact that the portfolio provided them a clear picture of their child's progress and they saw the portfolios as well organized, thorough, and more informative than a report card.

The few negative comments about the parent conference (11.3% in 1992; 16.5% in 1993) and the portfolios (5.4% in 1992; 12.9% in 1993) reflected a preference for report cards and grades, the inconvenience of the conference, or (though not necessarily negative) the need for more conference time or greater explanation of the portfolio or more materials in the portfolio.

Summary of Objective 1

The use of standardized test scores can create problems with interpretation, especially at lower grade levels and when used in a program which emphasizes contextually-based curriculum and

Table 13: Conferences and Portfolio Responses
Parent Survey - May 1992/August 1993

Parent Conferences and Portfolios	Yes	No
Conference set up for a time that was best for you		
1992 (n=212)	99.1%	0.9%
1993 (n=305)	96.7%	3.3%
Teacher answered all the questions completely		
1992 (n=211)	100%	-
1993 (n=306)	98.7%	1.3%
Teacher explained the contents of the portfolio		
1992 (n=210)	99.1%	0.9%
1993 (n=303)	99.0%	1.0%

assessment. Despite these problems, the results of the third grade ITBS and writing assessments strongly support the conclusion that Objective 1 is being met. Teacher rankings, the informal reading inventory, and parent comments further support this conclusion.

Objective 2. Self-esteem and socialization

Parent Questionnaire

Four items on the May 1992 and August 1993 parent questionnaires elicited parent opinions about the impact of P.A.C.E. of their child's progress in and enjoyment of school. In Table 14, the summary of the frequency of responses and number of comments for each question is presented.

For both years, a majority of the parents responded that being in the same room with younger or older children had a positive effect on their child. Approximately one-fourth of the parents reviewed the impact as non-existent, while less than 7% believed it to be negative.

The comments supplied by parents in support of their answers to the question more dramatically reflect parent support of their child's being in a classroom with younger or older children. For both years, over 85% of the comments written in response to this question were listed under the positive or no negative effects. Most of the positive comments were related to:

** the growth and maturation of the student ("My child always was introverted around grown-ups, but since she has been to school with other children older, than herself, she has opened up more. She talks more than she used to."),

Table 14: Classroom Effects, Enjoyment, and Learning
Parent Survey - May 1992/August 1993

	Positive Effect	No Effect	Negative Effect
In the same room with younger or older children			
1992 (n=215)	69.3%	24.2%	6.5%
1993 (n=301)	67.4%	24.6%	6.6%
In the same room with students stronger or not as strong academically			
1992 (n=207)	68.1%	25.6%	6.3%
1993 (n=293)	60.1%	33.4%	6.5%
In comparison with last year:			
	Better	**Same**	**Less**
My child has enjoyed school this year			
1992 (n=170)	67.6%	23.5%	8.8%
1993 (n=251)	49.4%	41.4%	9.2%
	More	**Same**	**Less**
My child has learned			
1992 (n=174)	79.9%	15.5%	4.6%
1993 (n=240)	59.6%	35.0%	5.4%

**better relationships with older and younger students ("one was learning from older children, one was helping younger children."),

**improved self-confidence ("She came home and said, 'I know how to read, you don't even have to tell me the words!"), and

**the opportunity to share learning and knowledge with other children ("children learn from each other"; "liked coming home telling me who she helped out today.").

The few negative comments for this item were in the same area, but in the opposite direction. For example, age differences were seen as a disruptive factor both academically and socially ("As a parent, I fear that the higher level children may not be challenged enough with this program and that too much of their time might be spent 'helping' or peer teaching their lower academic level classmates.").

The responses to the question about the impact on students being in the same room with students who were academically stronger or not as strong had generally the same pattern as for the question about age impact. Over 90% of the respondents for both years answered that this arrangement had a positive or no negative effect on their child. Only a little over 6% rated it as negative.

Parent comments for both years on this question were also similar in distribution as the previous question. Almost 90% of the comments related to this item were positive or indicated no negative effects. Many of the comments focused on:

** improved language and communication skills ("program has

allowed my child to develop academically as needed. She's done well with the program academically and has excelled in learning as a result of the program and other factors."),

**improved self-esteem,

**the benefits of working with different academic abilities, and

** student motivation to learn.

The few negative comments for this item reflected parents review that P.A.C.E. classrooms had a negative effects on self-esteem and placed too much focus on weaker students ("I think in my child's case it may have had a slight negative effect because my child is a very slow reader and some younger children may read better than my child.").

The vast majority of parents in 1992 believed that their child enjoyed the first year in the P.A.C.E. program better than (67.6%) or the same as (23.5%) the previous year when the program had not been implemented. This response pattern was not as strong in 1993, possibly reflecting the fact that the program has become more familiar to the students and the parents, possibly reflecting a mild Hawthorne effect. As with the previous items, comments for this item were overwhelmingly positive. Parents stated that their child:

** enjoyed school and the teacher ("She has stepped into a whole new environment. She loves it...she has blossomed."),

**learned more, and

**were in a less competitive environment with

**diverse classmates.

School adjustment problems and child boredom with school were generally typical of the extremely few negative comments.

In a pattern reflecting the responses to other items in the parent questionnaire in 1992, almost 80% of the parents believed that their child had learned more during the first year of P.A.C.E. than during the previous academic year. While 15.5% felt that their child had learned the same as the previous year, only 4.6% of the respondents felt that their child had learned less than in the previous year. For 1993 and as with the previous item, a smaller percentage of positive responses was found. Almost all of the comments written with this item were positive; there was only one negative comment for this item ("the P.A.C.E. of leaning slowed down"). The positive comments reflected parent beliefs that:

**their child was more knowledgeable,

**there were more activities for the students ("more material in the curriculum"),

**teachers were more attentive, and

**the child's maturity level improved ("my child is more mature").

Teacher Interviews and Questionnaire

Teacher responses in the interview and questionnaires completed over the two years of the project were generally consistent. The vast majority of teachers responses addressed the positive impact that P.A.C.E. had on the students of Metter Primary School (see Table

15 for an overview of the 1993 comments). Students were seen as being more self-confident, more independent, and more motivated as a result of P.A.C.E. The teachers viewed the risk-free environment which they have created as benefiting both academic and social skills. The teachers believe that the students enjoyed school more as a result of P.A.C.E..

The comments about the negative impacts of P.A.C.E. on students were related primarily to academic progress and discipline. One teacher commented that the needs of smarter children were not beirg met and that test scores were being negatively affected. Another teacher cited reduced discipline as a concern ("They show less self-discipline and responsibility").

Summary of Objective 2

It is evident from the parent and teacher responses that Objective 2 has been met. The overwhelming majority of parents and teachers responding through questionnaires and interviews believe that the student self-esteem, self-confidence, and socialization have been enhanced during the two years of the project.

Objective 3. Shared-Decision Making

As evident in the project description, shared decision making is a cornerstone of P.A.C.E.. This is also reflected in the teacher responses in the interviews and surveys conducted over the two years of the project. The positive aspects most often cited by teachers were:

**opportunities to share ideas ("I feel comfortable trying out new ideas and varied ways of managing my classroom.

Table 15. Teacher Comments - 1993 Questionnaire

POSITIVE - CHILD	FREQUENCY
increased self-esteem & confidence	7
enjoy school & learning	8
self-motivated	4
improved skills academically and socially	6
students learn from each other	13
more one on one instruction	5
more autonomy	8
less behavior problems	2

NEGATIVE - CHILD	FREQUENCY
none	4
interruptions (field trips)	2
need better listening skills	1
not enough time	5
children need physical space to call their own	1
need more structure for some children	5
meeting all needs for wide range of ability levels	6
middle ability students being slighted	2
students show less self-discipline and responsibility	1
test scores lower	1
need better themes	1

POSITIVE - TEACHER	FREQUENCY
enjoy program	4
better parent-school relationship	2
attending conferences	9
improved morale	1
improved self-esteem & confidence	3
more autonomy	4
increased student skills	3
personal growth as a teacher	6
having student for two years	6
everyone contributes	2
multi-age grouping	2
able to buy new things	1
hands-on learning	1

NEGATIVE - TEACHER	FREQUENCY
not enough time for planning	10
not enough time to accomplish things	8
communication problems (teams, etc.)	2
some exclusion from pod system	1
more conference time with parents & teachers (CART)	1
teaching a unit for a month	1
red tape	1
wide range of abilities	6
progress reports for parent conferences	1

IMPROVING PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY
time mgmt. for students & teachers	2
less interruptions (better planning of trips)	2
guided discovery approach stressed more	1
more planning time	7
more structured classrooms for special students	1
reading recovery teacher	1
computer labs	1
narrower ability grouping	2
planning for middle students	1
see answer #13 continuous progress	1
closer look at scheduling	1
better student placement	1
remain in cub team until ready for tiger team	3
have pre-K	1
set-up quieter area in classroom	1
see #25 non-seasonal topics for all	1

EFFECT OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT	FREQUENCY
very positive	6
better communication	2
enthusiastic	2
more awareness of students progress	5
enhanced student learning	4
parents like conferences	3
become more a part of child's education	6
little parent involvement	3

ENHANCING PARENT INVOLVEMENT	FREQUENCY
volunteer program	5
emphasize importance of parent involvement	4
have third time a day in the classroom	3
loan education materials to parents	1
home visits	1
more active P.T.A.	1
serve as resource person	1
create an environment where parents feel welcome	1
keep them informed	3
have more say in child's education	1
programs for parents where the children are involved	1
covered dish and discussion time	1
workshop for parents	1
parent night	1

DECISION MAKING PROCESS	FREQUENCY
more a part of the school	1
more comfortable with old method	1
more teacher involvement	10
more faculty input	2
has not changed	9
more consensus by whole staff	2
make better decisions	1

HAS PROJECT CHANGED ATTITUDE TOWARD EDUCATION OF PRIMARY STUDENTS

Yes = 19 No = 10

HOW ?

education is exciting
confirmed attitude that children can be responsible for learning
affirm belief in child-centered developmentally appropriate curriculum
letting students learn at their own pace
rewarding having students for two years
children need special attention
need a variety of teaching methods
learn from each other
this project is the best way to teach
grading is unimportant compared to interest and effort of children

**Having the opportunity to participate in helping fellow teachers make presentations has helped me to see the impact of the program on the students. My self-esteem has improved as a result of this.",

**opportunities for professional growth ("Professionally, this has continued to be very challenging and I feel I have grown because of my exposure to professional readings, conferences, and my fellow teachers."), and

**the freedom to innovate and make decisions ("The freedom to choose what goes on in my room. My self-confidence is greater. I enjoy teaching in this atmosphere. ").

Several comments reflected a renewed sense of enthusiasm and enjoyment as a teacher.

The negative aspects of the P.A.C.E. project in terms of shared decision making were very few indeed. As cited in the first year evaluations, many of the concerns voiced by teachers about P.A.C.E. were centered around the range of ages and academic abilities in multi-age, heterogeneously grouped classrooms. These concerns persisted over the two years of the project, but were voiced by less than five teachers. Concern was also voiced by one teacher that shared decision making was a convenient way of fooling teachers into believing that they actually had some control over their professional lives.

The most frequent comments about negative aspects of P.A.C.E. were related to time. There seemed to be a consistent concern about the inordinate amount of time that the shared decision making process

took, especially when it is implemented with other innovations such as whole language instruction, thematic units, continuous progress and portfolio assessment. Add to this the tremendous number of interruptions due to the large number of visitors, and teachers have just cause for believing that time is a resource more precious than gold. (The problem of interruptions is reflected in the fact that for four months in the 1992-1993 school year, an average of 45 visitors a month completed the visitor questionnaire. While it is clear that there are quite a few educations in Georgia (and elsewhere) who see the P.A.C.E. project as important enough to visit, this "fame" has its obvious down side.)

Summary of Objective 3

Program descriptions, project materials, and teacher and parent data show that the shared-decision making process is in place at Primary School. Problems with time constraints are quite clear, but the vast majority of the teachers support the attempt at shared decision making. More importantly, they believe that shared decision making is working.

Caveats

The success of the P.A.C.E project in attaining the project objectives has not come easily. Project teachers, administrators, evaluators, and parents, as well as numerous visitors, have observed a variety of issues which must be confronted in the implementation of a project such as P.A.C.E.

In conversations with visitors from other schools, there appears to be a general sense of lack of administrative support necessary to

implement a project such as P.A.C.E. The staff of Metter Primary School have noted that this could be overcome by having the administrators immerse themselves in the professional literature and activities (e.g., conferences, workshops) related to the various components of the project.

Similarly, concern emerged about the lack of teacher understanding and motivation to become involved in such a program. Teacher professional development in the same areas as the administrators can go a long way in addressing these issues. While understanding and motivation are clearly similar issues, they seem at times to be inextricably intertwined in a school improvement project such as P.A.C.E.

The Metter Primary School staff determined from their conversations with visitors and from their visits to other schools that there can be difficulties in trying to a implement continuous progress program in one elementary school in a district that has several elementary schools. Resistance is anticipated from the other elementary schools (not to mention the articulation considerations with the receiving schools), as well as the central office staff. Serious attempts at professional collaboration and development seem to hold the key to reducing these problems.

Community support at the outset of a departure from "business as usual" is also critical. A variety of community and special interest group meetings proved to be quite helpful in the Metter Primary School staff's efforts to have the parents and the community embrace the project. In addition, extensive scripting and rehearsing in

order to ensure that school personnel were providing consistent answers and a coherent approach to the community proved to be a superior technique for winning support.

Any school wanting to adopt Project P.A.C.E or any other sweeping change must realize that it is a major restructuring venture. Countless hours must be spent in planning and staff development prior to project implementation. Upon implementation, the time commitment remains extremely demanding, but the focus shifts to continuous curriculum development and tireless "kid watching" in order to ensure that individual student needs are met. As clearly understated by a Metter Primary staff member, "Staff readiness, strong leadership, and a climate for change are key ingredients for the success of a multiage continuous progress program such as P.A.C.E."

References

Georgia Department of Education. (1993). Grades three and five writing tests; assessment and instructional guide. Atlanta, GA.

Yin, R. (1984). Case study research. Beverly Hills, CA: SAGE Publications.

Developmental Stage/Scoring Guidelines
Georgia Writing Assessment for Grades 3 and 5
1992-93 Statewide Field Test

Stage 1: **The Emerging Writer**
- Little or no topic development, organization, and/or detail.
- Little awareness of audience or writing task.
- Errors in surface features prevent the reader from understanding the writer's message.

Stage 2: **The Developing Writer**
- Topic beginning to be developed. Response contains the beginning of an organizational plan.
- Limited awareness of audience and/or task.
- Simple word choice and sentence patterns.
- Errors in surface features interfere with communication.

Stage 3: **The Focusing Writer**
- Topic clear even though development is incomplete. Plan apparent although ideas are loosely organized.
- Sense of audience and/or task.
- Minimal variety of vocabulary and sentence patterns.
- Errors in surface features interrupt the flow of communication.

Stage 4: **The Experimenting Writer**
- Topic clear and developed: development may be uneven. Clear plan with beginning, middle, and end. Beginning and/or ending may be clumsy.
- Written for an audience.
- Experiments with language and sentence patterns. Word combinations and word choice may be novel.
- Errors in surface features may interrupt the flow of communication.

Stage 5: **The Engaging Writer**
- Topic well developed. Clear beginning, middle, and end. Organization sustains the writer's purpose.
- Engages the reader.
- Effective use of varied language and sentence patterns.
- Errors in surface features do not interfere with meaning.

Stage 6: **The Extending Writer**
- Topic fully elaborated with rich details. Organization sustains writer's purpose and moves the reader through the piece.
- Engages and sustains the reader's interest.
- Creative and novel use of language and effective use of varied sentence patterns.
- Errors in surface features do not interfere with meaning.

Nonscorable Responses:

7 Blank
8 Illustrations only; no text, no letters
9 Not original text; copied from board, printed material, or another writer; slotted writing
10 Not related to assigned writing tasks
11 Illegible
12 Written in language other than English

From: Georgia Department of Education. (1993). Grades three and five writing tests: assessment and instructional guide. Appendix page 8. Atlanta, GA.